

India, Mauritius discuss Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement

By TIOL News Service

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India and Mauritius held the 1st session of India-Mauritius High-Powered Joint Trade Committee on 01-03 August 2022 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Srikanth Reddy, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India, Government of India, and Mr. Nalinath Boodhoo, Director, Trade Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Government of Mauritius. Senior officials representing relevant Government authorities from both the countries took part in the meeting.

The High-Powered Joint Trade Committee had been constituted as per the mandate of the India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership agreement (CECPA), to review the general functioning and implementation of the India-Mauritius CECPA which entered into force on 1st April, 2021. CECPA is the first trade Agreement signed by India with a country in Africa.

Both sides noted that the traditionally close, strong economic ties between the two countries touched a new high with the signing of the landmark CECPA. Appreciating the growth of the bilateral merchandise trade between India and Mauritius, which rose to USD 786.72 million in 2021-22 from USD 690.02 million in 2019-20, both sides agreed to enhance bilateral collaboration to further increase bilateral trade and realize the true potential of the bilateral relationship especially under the CECPA.

Both sides agreed to the inclusion of the General Economic Cooperation (GEC) Chapter and Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) in CECPA. The GEC chapter will enable enhancement of export competitiveness and enlarging the existing scope for collaboration, inter-alia, in the fields of Investments, Financial Services, Textile, Small and Medium Enterprises, Handicrafts, Gems and Jewellery, Information and Communication Technology, Film Production, Space Technology, Blue Economy, Port Infrastructure, Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals & Bio-technology, Competition Policy, Renewable Energy etc.

Extensive interactions were held between both the sides in Services sector with regard to establishing equivalence in certification, skills and licensing requirements of various professional bodies and exploring collaboration/ cooperation arrangement between Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and its counterpart in Mauritius on developing skill-sets. Mauritian side, while conveying the shortage of professionals in Mauritius in various sectors such as ICT, Financial Services, Film production, Engineering, Health, Tourism/Hospitality and Ocean Economy etc., welcomed movement of high skilled professionals from India to Mauritius.

Both the sides expressed willingness to enter into a Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement (CMMA) and agreed to initiate discussions on the Agreement soon.

Affirming mutual keenness in diversifying and expanding trade basket, the two sides discussed additional market access issues and agreed to discuss bilateral recognition arrangements of equivalence on SPS and TBT measures. Both sides also agreed to identify bilateral focal points to further strengthen bilateral institutional cooperation.

The discussions of the 1st Session of India-Mauritius High-Powered Joint Trade Committee were cordial and forward-looking, reflecting a common desire of both sides to enhance further trade and investment, and removing any bottlenecks hampering bilateral trade and investments. Both sides agreed to hold the next session of India- Mauritius High Powered JTC meeting in 2023.